

## **AN ANALYSIS OF SELF-CONCEPT IN MIDDLE ADOLESCENTS**

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### **Abstract**

*Self-concept, self-esteem and identity are constructs that psychologists find useful in understanding people's development and behavior. The term self-concept is a general term used to refer to how someone thinks about, evaluates or perceives themselves. In other words the self-concept is the picture one has of himself/herself. Analysis of self-concept in adolescence is important for its predictive capacity of various behaviours in different contexts of life, family, social, school. The present study is an attempt to analyse the self-concept of adolescence with respect to its dimensions viz. Contentment and worthiness, Attractiveness, approval by others, Determinism and significance, Confidence and value of existence and Resilience. Descriptive survey method was adopted for the study and a sample of 100 (72 females and 28 males) middle adolescent age group students were selected by simple random technique. The Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) designed and standardized by Robson was used as the research tool. The comparison and analysis of the data was done using SPSS Version 25. The findings revealed a significant difference among the male and female adolescents with respect to overall self-concept and Determinism and significance, Confidence and value of existence dimensions of self-concept. Female mid-adolescents students were found to have a high self-concept as compared to male mid-adolescent students.*

**Keywords:** Middle adolescents, Self-concept.



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### **Introduction:**

Self-concept, self-esteem and identity are constructs that psychologists find useful in understanding people's development and behavior. The self-concept is the picture one has of himself/herself. Self-esteem is the valuation of particular elements of the self. Identity is the unique combination of personality characteristics and social styles that defines oneself and is recognized by others. "The individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is". (Baumeister, 1999).

Erikson was the first author to identify it and assign it a fundamental importance in the process of adolescent growth, considering it an integrating process of personal transformation, social requirements and expectations for the future (Sprinthall & Collins, 2005). For most authors construction of identity is one of the main tasks of adolescence. Knope defines adolescence as a major discontinuity in the growth process and the resolution of the identity crisis, the main task of this stage (Sprinthall & Collins, 2005). Self-concept has a dynamic

nature: it starts in childhood and is structured along the different stages of life and development stages (Freitas, 2009). Hattiecit (quoted in Freitas, 2009) considers that the most significant changes and a more precise expression of self-concept occur in adolescence.

### **The Self in Adolescence**

1. William James argued that people can have multiple selves, just as they play multiple roles. Sociological theories claim that the self is formed as appraisals from others that are internalized. Cognitive psychologists argue that people create a theory of self and actively search for information about themselves. Humanistic psychologists argue that the self is partially formed through the individual's understanding of his/her own experience.
2. Young children often define themselves in terms of possessions and activities. Elementary school children look at their characteristics and compare themselves with others, but adolescents define themselves in more abstract terms. Their descriptions are more complex and some of the traits are in conflict with each other.
3. Early adolescents are not aware of these contradictions. During the middle years of adolescence, these contradictions bother teenagers and they are aware of acting phony or false. These contradictions are integrated during the late adolescent years. Discrepancies between the real self and the ideal self are troublesome, especially in middle adolescence.

### **Importance of self-concept in Adolescence:**

The analysis of self-concept in adolescence is important for its predictive capacity of various behaviours in different contexts of life, family, social, school. Vaz Serra (1988) quoted in Santos(2009, p.6) states that self-concept has a strong influence on everyday life, since it is useful in evaluating expressions of inappropriate behaviour, allowing human behaviour to be predicted and to know the idea an individual has of himself. Individuals with a positive self-concept have a positive perception of themselves and consider others in a less threatening way, i.e., they have the best coping strategies, feeling better about themselves and others.

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. To study the overall self-concept of middle adolescents.

2. To study the self-concept of middle adolescents dimensionally viz. Contentment and worthiness, Attractiveness, approval by others, Determinism and significance, Confidence and value of existence and Resilience.
3. To compare the overall self-concept of middle adolescents with respect to gender.
4. To compare the self-concept of middle adolescents dimensionally viz. Contentment and worthiness, Attractiveness, approval by others, Determinism and significance, Confidence and value of existence and Resilience with respect to gender.

#### **Hypotheses:**

1. The overall self-concept of middle adolescents is high.
2. The self-concept of middle adolescents dimensionally viz. Contentment and worthiness, Attractiveness, approval by others, Determinism and significance, Confidence and value of existence and Resilience is high.
3. There is no significant difference between the self-concept of middle adolescents with respect to gender.
4. There is no significant difference between the self-concept of middle adolescents dimensionally viz. Contentment and worthiness, Attractiveness, approval by others, Determinism and significance, Confidence and value of existence and Resilience with respect to gender.

#### **Method:**

Descriptive survey method was adopted for conducting the research.

#### **Sample and Sampling technique:**

A sample of 100 students (28 boys and 72 girls) belonging to the middle adolescent age group was selected from 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade by Random sampling technique from Urdu medium schools of Aurangabad city.

#### **Tools Used:**

The Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) designed and standardized by Robson was used for the research study. The SCQ is a self-report scale measuring self-esteem (Robson, 1989). It consists of 30 items (e.g., "I have control over my life," "I feel emotionally mature," "I can like myself even if others don't"). The items are based on seven components of self-esteem, according to theoretical and empirical information reviewed by Robson (1988). The scoring is performed on an eight-point scale, ranging from completely disagree to completely

agree. The individual is asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each statement, according to how they typically feel. The answers are scored on a scale of 0-7 and a total score is calculated. A high score represents high self-esteem, with 140 being considered the “normal” mean with a standard deviation of 20 (Romans et al., 1996; Robson, 1989). This measure has been used previously in studies with people with psychosis (e.g. Close and Garety, 1998; Freeman et al., 1998) and correlates highly with Rosenberg’s (1965) measure of self-esteem (Robson, 1989). The SCQ has been proven to have good reliability (Cron-bach’s  $\alpha$  of .89) and good validity (clinical validity of .70; i.e.). The questionnaire was translated in Urdu language before administering it on the Urdu medium students.

**Statistical Measures:**

The whole data collected was analysed using SPSS 25 (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) software. The statistical measures used were mean, t-test and Pearson’s correlation technique.

**Table no.1: Table showing the mean scores of self-concept of mid-adolescents and its dimensions:**

Sr.no	Aspect	Mean	Range	Interpretation
1.	Overall self-concept	128.460	71-140	Average
2.	Contentment and worthiness.	30.710	24-35	Average
3.	Attractiveness, approval by others.	25.6700	22-29	High
4.	Determinism and significance.	14.4600	12-17	Average
5.	Confidence and value of existence.	46.0800	45-59	High
6.	Resilience.	11.5400	10-12	High

**Table no.2: Table showing comparison of the overall self-concept with respect to gender:**

Aspect	Category	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Significant Level	Interpretation
Self-Concept	Male	28	122.0	15.39	3.096	0.05 level (1.96)	Significant
	Female	72	130.9	11.87			
			58	19			

**Table no.3: Table showing dimensional comparison of self-concept with respect to gender:**

Aspect	Category	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Significance Level	Interpretation
Contentment and worthiness.	Male	2	30.14	6.653	0.654	0.05 level (1.96)	Not Significant
		8	29	96			
	Female	7	30.93	4.856			
		2	06	61			
Attractiveness, approval by others.	Male	2	24.28	5.262	1.692	0.05 level (1.96)	Not Significant
		8	57	43			
	Female	7	26.20	5.040			
		2	83	50			
Determinism and significance.	Male	2	13.14	5.468	2.008	0.05 level (1.96)	Significant
		8	29	52			
	Female	7	14.97	3.423			
		2	22	09			
Confidence and value of existence.	Male	2	43.21	8.247	2.763	0.05 level (1.96)	Significant
		8	43	82			
	Female	7	47.19	5.645			
		2	44	99			
Resilience.	Male	2	11.25	2.287	0.868	0.05 level (1.96)	Not Significant
		8	00	24			
	Female	7	11.65	2.001			
		2	28	12			

**Analysis and Interpretation of the results:**

From the values obtained in above mentioned Tables 1,2 and 3 we can draw the following results:

1. The overall self-concept of middle adolescents is average.
2. The self-concept of students of middle adolescents with respect to Contentment and worthiness dimension is average.
3. The self-concept of students of middle adolescents with respect to Attractiveness, approval by others dimension is high.
4. The self-concept of students of middle adolescents with respect to Determinism and significance dimension is average.
5. The self-concept of students of middle adolescents with respect to Confidence and value of existence dimension is high.
6. The self-concept of students of middle adolescents with respect to Resilience dimension is high.

7. There is a significant difference between the self-concept of male and female middle adolescents.
8. The self-concept of female middle adolescents is higher than self-concept of male adolescents.
9. There is no significant difference between the self-concept of male and female middle adolescents with respect to Contentment and worthiness dimension.
10. There is no significant difference between the self-concept of male and female middle adolescents with respect to Attractiveness, approval by others dimension.
11. There is a significant difference between the self-concept of male and female middle adolescents with respect to Determinism and significance dimension.
12. The self-concept of female middle adolescents with respect to Determinism and significance dimension is higher than that of male adolescents.
13. There is a significant difference between the self-concept of male and female middle adolescents with respect to Confidence and value of existence dimension.
14. The self-concept of female middle adolescents with respect to Confidence and value of existence dimension is higher than that of male adolescents.
15. There is no significant difference between the self-concept of male and female middle adolescents with respect to Resilience dimension.

### **Suggestions:**

Placing the Self-Concept and Identity into Perspective:

Parents may help adolescents find who they are by encouraging the adolescent to look at alternatives, showing them ways of overcoming barriers, accepting the fact that teens are not going to be carbon copies of the adults around them, encouraging communication, helping teens understand that a certain amount of confusion is typical, and showing possible consequences to their decisions (Paul Kaplan).

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